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covered with crimes, who yet dared not deny the God, whose vengeance awaited them. He carried this terrible argument so far, as to invoke that name, which no being can pronounce without a shudder—Robespierre—whose auspices the class of morals was claiming. Thus spake the just! And God granted that these lines, inspired by the love of man, should be superior to any thing that the author, who had produced so many eloquent works, had hitherto written, that posterity might behold in his finest page the record of his noblest action?

St Pierre attached great importance himself to certain theories of his own in natural philosophy, particularly one, which refers the movement of the tides to the dissolution of ice at the poles. This object occupied his mind more and more as he advanced in life; but his views on the subject have not been sanctioned by the approbation of good judges, and it would be superfluous, even if we had room, to discuss them here. His business after all was more with the *optic naiads*, to borrow an expression from the friend of Gray, than with the nymphs of the ocean. The tides, whose principles of motion he had studied with success, were those, which swell the heart and gush from the eye.

ART. XI.—*Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice. A tragedy, in five acts, by Lord Byron.* London, 1821, pp. 261.

THE Baron de Grimm, in speaking of the decline of French tragedy, considers it as so obviously to be accounted for, that it was strange more than one explanation of its causes was offered. How is it possible, he asks, that any display of the influence of a *single passion* on the heroic character should yet remain to be discovered? Has not every different relation, in which *love* can be exhibited in romance, been described? Is it not hopeless to look for a conflict of the different affections which has not been portrayed? Without inquiring into the answers to this argument, by those in France where the theory is held, who were then or are now founding their hopes on what de Grimm considers impossible, it is clear that the English theatre has fully determined in theory if it has not successfully demonstrated, that there are other dramatic passions than love. What Pope, when young, attempted but suppressed, and what Addison

feared to trust to the united favor of the political and literary factions of his time, a tragedy where the interest does not depend on love, has at least ceased to be considered as impossible. Yet even in those instances where the interest is to be excited by the influence of some other passion, it has been pretty commonly thought expedient to unite this also, not always with the most perfect success to the plot, and there are few dramas which preserve the interest of the passion unmixed, with the purity and simplicity of Douglas, referring to the distress of maternal affection throughout, without a single strophe devoted to the tenderness of a confidante. If we may argue from some expressions in his late letter on Bowles' Pope, Lord Byron is far from supposing any class of subjects beyond the province of poetry. Though dramatic poetry is not, in this connexion, actually referred to in this letter, yet it is natural that one who expresses so very decided an opinion of the universal range of the art, in general, would not confine any particular branch of it to the interest derived from one passion alone. As it was understood also, that Lord Byron did not mean to restrict himself to the conventional bonds of the acted drama, additional opportunity was given for the boldest choice in the passions, circumstances and history on which the interest of the plot should rely. We have made these remarks before giving our opinion, that the story of the tragedy is neither so valuable, as might have been produced by his lordship's own invention, nor with the license assumed, taken from history.

Very little variation from the facts is exhibited in the story of the play.* Michel Steno, a young nobleman, inscribes on the throne of the Doge of Venice two slanderous lines, reflecting on the chastity of his wife, in revenge for having suffered punishment for some indecorum in the palace. Being tried by the council of forty, he was sentenced to confinement for two months and banishment for a year. This punishment Lord Byron *commutes* to a month's arrest. Wrought to frenzy by this inadequate sentence, which he considers an additional insult on the part of the council, Faliero meditates vengeance. In this mood, he has an interview with the leader of a band of conspirators, with whom he unites. By the attachment of one of their number, however, to a young noble, the plot is

* Muratori Annali d' Italia ix.

arrested in the very moment of its success, and the action concludes with the execution of the conspirators.

A pretty obvious fault in the story, the anticipated objection to which we think not fully answered by the noble author, is the great age of the hero. After the few dramas, like *Lear*, *Ædipus* &c. where the action turns on the very interest of the associations connected with extreme age, we seem to require that the violent passions employed to excite tragic interest should be displayed by the young and vigorous. It seems to be the dictate of nature to be shocked at the exposure of the mind to the violence of these passions, after it has ceased to possess fortitude to endure them. 'The octogenarian chief, blind old Dandolo,' seems better placed in the war council, than on his galley's deck in the tumult and danger of the engagement. Very much too of the actual vivacity of sentiment and strength of passion, on which the interest of romance depends, are incompatible with the experience of eighty years, or if found at that period are unnatural and unpleasing. It is well for us that it is so, and fatal beyond description would be the continuance of the feverish excitability of youth, to its possessor. Yet the story of Lord Byron's tragedy seems even to add to the natural impropriety of the age of his hero. A prince, who has passed a life of eighty years in every variety of action and peril, seems ill in costume, when driven to madness by a boy's libel on a young lady's honor. The question of the chief of the council of Ten seems unanswerable.

‘ And can it be, that the great doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years,
And honours on his head, could thus allow
His fury like an angry boy's to master
All feeling, wisdom, faith and fear on such
A provocation as a young man's petulance ?’

Now although it may be and is said, that this event was only the occasion and not the cause of the treason of the Doge, as far as the dramatic effect is concerned we can see no other. The play opens with displaying Faliero in fearful suspense awaiting the sentence of the Forty on the libeller. This suspense and agitation, the consolation attempted to be offered and the whole impression conveyed, depend solely on the Doge's personal dishonor. In the beautiful close, too,

of the third act, a part of which we shall attempt to extract, the sentiments uttered by Faliero, are in their *general* tendency directly the reverse of the supposition that he had long suffered under the tyranny of the nobles, although incidentally, as if in anticipation of a similar objection, such allusions are made. All these remarks we suggest from the conviction that though historically true in the particular instance, this story is neither very natural nor highly dramatic. In the preface to the tragedy Lord Byron takes occasion to express great dissatisfaction with Dr Moore for the slighting manner in which he mentions these events in his View of Italy. Without stopping to observe on the sensibility displayed by the poet to any opinion differing from his own in regard to his subject, though expressed while it was yet *feræ naturæ* and unreclaimed, it is worth remarking that even if the conduct of the Doge should not appear to others, as to the author of Zeluco, extraordinary, it does not therefore follow that it is dramatic, which seems to be the point his lordship should establish. Of the different manners of dramatizing history; that of Shakspeare in the Henries, for instance, where a long series of events is crowded together and the poetical interest divided between them as they pass and united to form a whole character or reign, and that of most of the French tragedies where a single important fact is adopted and the whole action, on the principle of unity, made to refer to it, the former has clearly the advantage above alluded to: that though any particular event or passion may be unnatural or not dramatic, however intimately connected with the interest, a whole life or reign cannot. Accordingly, we very often find a great degree of the actual interest of these productions depending on some character or event which is episodical and subsidiary. A ready answer to this, of course, is that the simplicity and unity of the action are destroyed, but without discussing the hard doctrine of the unities, it is certainly enough for us that art be as unique as nature itself. The order of events is not thus in reality. One great and important circumstance is not prepared, foreseen and produced by a thousand others acting in as regular and direct concert as the balance wheels of an engine, but passions and agents conflict, events of various degrees of importance occur and vary and modify the expected transactions of the time. And, although the attention must not be distracted by this variety, it would seem that the simplicity of an action is

carried too far when it becomes unnaturally distinct and naked.

The other objection we find to the plot, and which we will dismiss as soon as possible, is the means of its discovery. The motive of Bertram to betray the conspirators, personal gratitude to a young nobleman, is not, it appears, displayed with sufficient distinctness, and we think the scene of the disclosure not eminently successful. This, it should seem, should be a portion of the action, of vast interest. We have traced a powerful conspiracy against the state, boldly conceived, prudently conducted and long matured. As it were to insure its success, the chief of the republic with his family and retainers unites himself with it, and we witness the final council which is to be followed in a few hours by the fatal execution. It is natural to expect that the means by which all this is arrested should bear some relation, in point of dramatic effect, to the peril averted. For although the change of feeling in any individual must of course be always extremely disproportionate in importance to the danger of the state, abstractly considered, it became the duty of the poet to present in strong relief those personal motives which, at the time, have weighed more in the mind of the *delator* than his reason or his oath. In the scene between Bertram and Lioni we think this is not done. It seems as if so much important business had crowded on the poet in the two last acts (to use the phrase of the theatre) that he was forced to slur it. In this scene a gay young nobleman returns 'right weary from a revel,' and after a soliloquy most beautiful indeed and perfectly in character, observing *aloud* the calm beauty of the night, and contrasting it with the scene he had left, he is visited by a plebeian, a leader of the conspiracy, who comes to warn him to remain within during its execution. The character of this Bertram, as displayed in the third act and the tone of raillery with which he is at first treated by Lioni, render this part of the tragedy, in our opinion, far less impressive than was demanded.

For the reasons we have given we pass the scene following the declaration of the partial sentence. The torrent of angry reproach uttered by the prince against the nobles, mixed with a sentiment like remorse for having served them so long, is wonderfully impressive. The interview between the Doge and Angiolina, of which the following is the close, is, in our opinion, beautifully written.

Angiolina.—My lord, I look'd but to my father's wishes,
Hallow'd by his last words, and to my heart
For doing all its duties, and replying
With faith to him with whom I was affianced.
Ambitious hopes ne'er cross'd my dreams ; and should
The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.

Doge.—I do believe you ; and I know you true :
For love, romantic love, which in my youth
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been
No lure for me, in my most passionate days,
And could not be so now, did such exist.
But such respect, and mildly paid regard
As a true feeling for your welfare, and
A free compliance with all honest wishes ;
A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness
Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings
As youth is apt in, so as not to check
Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew
You had been won, but thought the change your choice ;
A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct,—
A trust in you—a patriarchal love,
And not a doting homage—friendship, faith—
Such estimation in your eyes as these
Might claim, I hoped for.

Angiolina.—And have ever had.

Doge.—I think so. For the difference in your years
You knew it, choosing me, and chose : I trusted
Not to my qualities, nor would have faith
In such, nor ornaments of nature,
Were I still in my five and twentieth spring ;
I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins ; I trusted to the soul
God gave you—to the truths your father taught you—
To your belief in heaven—to your mild virtues—
To your own faith and honor, for my own.

Angiolina.—You have done well.—I thank you for that trust,
Which I have never for one moment ceased
To honor you the more for.

Doge.—Where is honor,
Innate and precept-strengthen'd 'tis the rock
Of faith connubial ; where it is not—where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream

Of honesty in such infected blood,
 Although 'twere wed to him it covets most :
 An incarnation of the poet's god
 In all his marble-chisell'd beauty, or
 The demi-deity, Alcides, in
 His majesty of superhuman manhood,
 Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not ;
 It is consistency which forms and proves it :
 Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
 The once fall'n woman must forever fall ;
 For vice must have variety, while virtue
 Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
 Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect.

Angiolina.—And seeing, feeling thus this truth in others.
 (I pray you pardon me ;) but wherefore yield you
 To the most fierce of fatal passions, and
 Disquiet your great thoughts with restless hate
 Of such a thing as Steno ?

Doge.—You mistake me.
 It is not Steno who could move me thus ;
 Had it been so, he should—but let that pass.

Angiolina.—What is 't you feel so deeply, then, even now ?

Doge.—The violated majesty of Venice,
 At once insulted in her lord and laws.

Angiolina.—Alas ! why will you thus consider it ?

Doge.—I have thought on't till—but let me lead you back
 To what I urged ; all these things being noted,
 I wedded you ; the world then did me justice
 Upon the motive, and my conduct proved
 They did me right, while yours was all to praise :
 You had all freedom—all respect—all trust
 From me and mine ; and, born of those who made
 Princes at home, and swept kings from their thrones
 On foreign shores, in all things you appear'd
 Worthy to be our first of native dames.

Angiolina.—To what does this conduct ?

Doge.—To thus much—that
 A miscreant's angry breath may blast it all—
 A villain, whom for his unbridled bearing,
 Even in the midst of our great festival,
 I caused to be conducted forth, and taught
 How to demean himself in ducal chambers ;
 A wretch like this may leave upon the wall
 The blighting venom of his sweltering heart,
 And this shall spread itself in general poison ;
 And woman's innocence, man's honor, pass

Into a by-word ; and the doubly felon
(Who first insulted virgin modesty
By a gross affront to your attendant damsels
Amidst the noblest of our dames in public)
Requite himself for his most just expulsion
By blackening publicly his sovereign's consort,
And be absolved by his upright compeers.

Angiolina.—But he has been condemn'd into captivity.

Doge.—For such as him a dungeon were acquittal ;
And his brief term of mock-arrest will pass
Within a palace. But I've done with him ;
The rest must be with you.

Angiolina.—With me, my lord ?

Doge.—Yes, *Angiolina*. Do not marvel ; I
Have let this prey upon me till I feel
My life cannot be long ; and fain would have you
Regard the injunctions you will find within
This scroll (*Giving her a paper*)—Fear not : they are for
your advantage :

Read them hereafter at the fitting hour.

Angiolina.—My lord, in life, and after life, you shall
Be honor'd still by me : but may your days
Be many yet—and happier than the present !
This passion will give way, and you will be
Serene, and what you should be—what you were.

Doge.—I will be what I should be, or be nothing ;
But never more—oh ! never, never more,
O'er the few days or hours which yet await
The blighted old age of Faliero, shall
Sweet Quiet shed her sunset ! Never more
Those summer shadows rising from the past
Of a not ill-spent nor inglorious life,
Mellowing the last hours as the night approaches,
Shall soothe me to my moment of long rest.
I had but little more to ask, or hope,
Save the regards due to the blood and sweat,
And the soul's labor through which I had toil'd
To make my country honor'd. As her servant—
Her servant, though her chief—I would have gone
Down to my fathers with a name serene
And pure as theirs ; but this has been denied me.—
Would I had died at Zara !

Angiolina.—There you saved
The state ; then live to save her still. A day,
Another day like that would be the best
Reproof to them, and sole revenge for you.

Doge.—But one such day occurs within an age ;
My life is little less than one, and 'tis
Enough for Fortune to have granted *once*,
That which scarce one more favor'd citizen
May win in many states and years. But why
Thus speak I ? Venice has forgot that day—
Then why should I remember it?—Farewell,
Sweet Angiolina ! I must to my cabinet ;
There's much for me to do—and the hour hastens.

Angiolina.—Remember what you were.

Doge.—It were in vain !

Joy's recollection is no longer joy,
While Sorrow's memory is a sorrow still.

Angiolina.—At least, whate'er may urge ; let me implore
That you will take some little pause of rest :
Your sleep for many nights has been so turbid,
That it had been relief to have awaked you,
Had I not hoped that Nature would o'erpower
At length the thoughts which shook your slumbers thus.
An hour of rest will give you to your toils
With fitter thoughts and freshen'd strength.

Doge.—I cannot—

I must not, if I could ; for never was
Such reason to be watchful : yet a few—
Yet a few days and dream-perturbed nights,
And I shall slumber well—but where ?—no matter.
Adieu, my Angiolina.

Angiolina.—Let me be

An instant—yet an instant your companion ;
I cannot bear to leave you thus.

Doge.—Come then,

My gentle child—forgive me ; thou wert made
For better fortunes than to share in mine,
Now darkling in their close toward the deep vale
Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.
When I am gone—it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that stirring
Within—above—around, that in this city
Will make the cemeteries populous
As e'er they were by pestilence or war,—
When I *am* nothing, let that which I *was*
Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips,
A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remember ;—
Let us be gone, my child—the time is pressing. [Exeunt.

After parting from Angiolina, the Doge repairs to the place of meeting, near the church where his ancestors are buried. The thoughts suggested to him by the hour of night, the remembrance of the characters of his ancestry, and the reflection on his present purpose, are surprisingly natural. He is then introduced to the meeting of the conspirators. The following is part of the passage alluded to above in the close of the third act.

Doge.—Ye, though ye know and feel our mutual mass
Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant
What fatal poison to the springs of life,
To human ties, and all that's good and dear,
Lurks in the present institutes of Venice :
All these men were my friends ; I loved them, they
Requited honorably my regard :
We served and fought ; we smiled and wept in concert ;
We revell'd or we sorrow'd side by side ;
We made alliances of blood and marriage ;
We grew in years and honors fairly, till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them choose me for their prince, and then farewell !
Farewell all social memory ! all thoughts
In common ! and sweet bonds which link old friendships,
When the survivors of long years and actions,
Which now belong to history, sooth the days
Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
Of half a century on his brother's brow,
And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
Flit round them whispering of the days gone by,
And seeming not all dead, as long as two
Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble——
Oime !—Oime ! and must I do this deed ?

Israel Bertuccio.—My lord, you are much moved : it is not
now
That such things must be dwelt upon.

Doge.—Your patience
A moment—I recede not : mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour that made me Doge, the *Doge* THEY made me—
Farewell the past ! I died to all that had been,
Or rather they to me : no friends, no kindness,

No privacy of life—all were cut off :
 They came not near me, such approach gave umbrage ;
 They could not love me, such was not the law ;
 They thwarted me, 'twas the state's policy ;
 They baffled me, 'twas a patrician's duty ;
 They wrong'd me, for such was to right the state ;
 They could not right me, that would give suspicion ;
 So that I was a slave to my own subjects ;
 So that I was a foe to my own friends ;
 Begirt with spies for guards—with robes for power—
 With pomp for freedom—gaolers for a council—
 Inquisitors for friends—and hell for life !
 I had one only fount of quiet left,
 And *that* they poison'd ! My pure household gods
 Were shiver'd on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
 Sat grinning ribaldry and sneering scorn.

* * * * *

Doge.—Bear with me ! Step by step, and blow on blow,
 I will divide with you ; think not I waver :
 Ah ! no ; it is the *certainty* of all
 Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.
 But let these last and lingering thoughts have way,
 To which you only and the Night are conscious,
 And both regardless ; when the hour arrives,
 'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
 Which shall unpeople many palaces,
 And hew the highest genealogic trees
 Down to the earth, strew'd with their bleeding fruit,
 And crush their blossoms into barrenness :
This will I—must I—have I sworn to do,
 Nor aught can turn me from my destiny ;
 But still I quiver to behold what I
 Must be, and think what I have been ! Bear with me.

Israel Bertuccio.—Re-man your breast ; I feel no such remorse,

I understand it not : why should you change ?
 You acted, and you act on your free will,

Doge.—Ay, there it is—*you* feel not, nor do I,
 Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
 A thousand lives, and, killing, do no murder ;
 You *feel* not—*you* go to this butcher-work
 As if these high-born men were steers for shambles !
 When all is over, you'll be free and merry,
 And calmly wash those hands incarnadine ;
 But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows
 In this surprising massacre, shall be,

Shall see, and feel—oh God ! oh God ! 'tis true,
 And thou dost well to answer that it was
 “My own free will and act,” and yet you err,
 For I *will* do this ! Doubt not—fear not ; I
 Will be your most unmerciful accomplice ;
 And yet I act no more on my free will,
 Nor my own feelings—both compel me back ;
 But there is *hell* within me and around,
 And like the demon who believes and trembles
 Must I abhor and do. Away ! away !
 Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
 To gather the retainers of our house.
 Doubt not, Saint Mark's great bell shall wake all Venice,
 Except her slaughter'd senate : ere the sun
 Be broad upon the Adriatic, there
 Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
 The roar of waters in the cry of blood !
 I am resolved—come on.'

The next act opens with the scene between Bertram and Lioni already described, and closes with the arrest of Faliero and the dispersion of the conspirators. The last comprises the trial and execution, first of the leaders of the conspiracy and afterwards of the Doge. The duchess is present during Faliero's trial, and utters an affecting appeal to the council. The following is the concluding apostrophe of the Doge.

' *Doge*.—I speak to Time and to Eternity,
 Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
 Ye elements ! in which to be resolved
 I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit
 Upon you ! Ye blue waves ? which bore my banner,
 Ye winds ! which flutter'd o'er as if you loved it,
 And fill'd my swelling sails as they were wafted
 To many a triumph ! Thou, my native earth,
 Which I have bled for, and thou foreign earth,
 Which drank this willing blood from many a wound !
 Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
 Reek up to Heaven ! Ye skies, which will receive it !
 Thou sun ! which shinest on these things, and Thou !
 Who kindlest and who quenchest suns !—Attest !
 I am not innocent—but are these guiltless ?
 I perish, but not unavenged ; for ages
 Float up from the abyss of time to be,
 And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
 Of this proud city, and I leave my curse

On her and hers for ever !—— Yes, the hours
Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield
Unto a bastard Attila, without
Shedding so much blood in her last defence
As these old veins, oft drain'd in shielding her,
Shall pour in sacrifice.—She shall be bought
And sold, and be an *appanage* to those
Who shall despise her !—She shall stoop to be
A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, panders for a people !
Then when the Hebrew 's in thy palaces,
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his !
When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
Make their nobility a plea for pity !
Then, when the few who still retain a wreck
Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-gerent,
Even in the palace where they sway'd as sovereigns,
Even in the palace where they slew their sovereign,
Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
From an adúlteress boastful of her guilt
With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation ;—when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorn'd even by the vicious for such vices
As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
Defy all codes to image or to name them ;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom,
All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entail'd on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
A wider proverb for worse prostitution ;—
When all the ills of conquer'd states shall cling thee,
Vice without splendor, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er,
But in its stead coarse lusts of habitude,
Prurient yet passionless, cold studied lewdness,
Depraving nature's frailty to an art ;—
When these and more are heavy on thee, when

Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
 Youth without honor, age without respect,
 Meanness and weakness, and a sense of wo
 'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar'st not murmur,
 Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
 Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
 Amidst thy many murders, think of mine !
 Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes !
 Gehenna of the waters ! thou sea Sodom !
 Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods !
 The and thy serpent seed !

[*Here the Doge turns, and addresses the executioner.*]

Slave, do thine office !

Strike as I struck the foe ! Strike as I would
 Have struck those tyrants ! Strike deep as my curse !
 Strike—and but once !

[*The Doge throws himself upon his knees, and as the executioner raises his sword the scene closes.*']

We do not know if Lord Byron believes like Cowper, that it is necessary to *introduce* harsh and prosaic lines to relieve the monotony of blank verse, but many of them are certainly to be found. It is strange that Cowper should have taken up the idea* that it was necessary to *attempt* to be harsh and unmusical. With a language formed on the originals that ours is, it is not, at any rate, a very difficult task to relieve the monotony of too great sweetness by irregular lines, but on the contrary, we are confident a sufficient relief to the harmony of any poet's language will be found in the nature of the northern dialects, without looking far or long for harsh consonants and unmusical accents. This system of neglect of quantity and arrangement seems to be carried a little too far. There can be no question that the poetry of Pope, for instance, when flowing with constant regularity, and the cesura falling in the same place in every line with undeviating certainty, which regularity he evidently bestows as the last merit on the passages intended to be most impassioned, is unfavorable to the complete expression of strong emotion. Uniformity in all works of art, confers the pleasure of exciting the idea of the triumph of art, and in pure description or enumeration, this regularity may also be agreeable from the impression of order and distinctness it cannot but give :

* Preface to Cowper's Homer.

‘ Warms in the sun | refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the stars | and blossoms in the trees,
 Lives through all life | extends through all extent,
 Spreads undivided, | operates unspent.’

The antithesis and enumeration expressed in these lines, render the plain and strong division of the cæsura rather pleasant than otherwise. Can the reader, however, conceive of passages like the following, from *Childe Harold*, being *set off* into regularly recurring metrical periods of this kind, without losing all their sublimity?

‘ Arches on arches | as it were that Rome,
 Collecting all the trophies | of her line,
 Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
 Her Coliseum stands.’

Here one can hardly mark the place for the cæsura, particularly in the second line, where any pause seems unnecessary.

After all this, however, the modern poets, in seeking the reverse of wrong, have in many instances fallen into a style far more unpleasant than the regularity of Pope, since it is equally unnatural and more negligent. Who could believe, for instance, that the following lines were ‘measure and rhyme’ and still more were Moore’s, whose *songs* so often ‘rob the Hybla bees, and leave them honeyless?’

‘ Then I sing the wild song, which once ’twas rapture to hear, when our voices, both mingling, breathed like one on the ear; and as echo far off through the valley my sad orison rolls, I think, oh my love, ’tis thy voice from the kingdom of souls faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear.’*

Lord Byron has carried that disregard of scrupulous regularity, which, when restrained by rhyme, was so successful and sublime in *Childe Harold*, much too far in the blank verse of this poem. The lines constantly terminate with an unaccented and unimportant monosyllable, producing the most prosaic effect :

‘ Is doom’d to expiate his rash insult with—’
 ‘ But if his insults sink no deeper in—’ &c.

* Irish Melodies. We believe it is in the preface to the ‘*National Airs*’ that Moore professes to sacrifice ‘metre and even sense to his wild music.’ Without entrenching at all on the province of the composer, we may express our surprise that any air can be more beautiful, because the words which are sung in it are nonsense.

The frequent recurrence of lines like these and the following is unpleasant :

- ' I can see no one not even a patrician.'
- ' By the reference of the Avogadori.'
- ' Against the Genoese, which is still maintained.'
- ' As well had there been time to have got together.'

The poet is not sparing of colloquial familiarities. The following sounds like the subscription to a letter of civility :

' imploring you
In all things to rely upon my duty
As doth become your near and faithful kinsman,
And not less loyal citizen and subject.

Exit.

And however impatient the prince might have been, we venture to say, if he had spoken English, he would not have said,

' From me fear nothing : *out with it.*'

We are not sure, on the whole, that the method of the English dramatists, of uniting prose and poetry in the same performance, is not necessary to avoid the unfavorable effect produced, either by reciting indifferent and low circumstances in lofty language, or introducing poetry of a level with themselves. As to destroying the unity of the composition, not to speak of the example of the great teachers of unity, we hardly know how the passage above, and many others, can lay claim to the name of poetry but from the number of syllables, and nothing indeed could be more ludicrous than the attempt to add the dignity of poetry to such circumstances as an indifferent and formal ceremony of parting.

In the preface to this tragedy, Lord Byron gives the 'Mysterious Mother' the praise of being a *Roman* performance, in that it is not a '*puling love-play*.' We have already alluded to the unaccountable prejudice on this subject, and were it wholly past, however it might be a subject of wonder, it could hardly call for animadversion. Yet, even now it is thought an hazardous enterprise to undertake a play without at least attaching a love-plot to it, and though the author of *Waverly* (as he chooses to be called) has done much, romance is still claimed exclusively by this species of interest. We, of course, cannot bestow either the epithets or the sentiment of Lord Byron

on many beautiful performances ; yet it would seem from theory and appears from the effect, that instead of claiming the exclusive interest of scenic compositions, this passion should have been contented with a subordinate influence on the public stage. The most important effects on our happiness, produced by the social affections, are undoubtedly those, which retire to the solitude of domestic content or disappointment. It is not easy to suppose any thing less adapted for the exaggeration of dramatic effect than either. The repose and peace of the one, and the peculiar associations attached to suffering in the other, would seem to be least of all the natural subjects of the free exposure of the theatre. The stage is the only perfect criterion of dramatic performances, and let it be supported with the greatest purity and talent possible, one need only bring the question to this test to have it answered. The best acting, supported by the most willing sympathy of the spectators, can hardly support the love-scenes of any tragedy, and the moment we destroy the effect produced by the associations of delight in the poetry which we enjoy from having read the performance, this tediousness is converted into disgust. Not the Venus when in the dress and with the attributes of Alecto, as she was sometimes painted, seems less attractive than a dramatic heroine, whose sentiments and character are distorted and exaggerated to the proper stage effect. Accordingly, we find that this interest is seldom long employed successfully, but when in connexion or opposition to the more distinct and obvious motives and passions. Juliet has seen her lover but a few hours when his approaching fate from his public crime stamps his countenance, in her eyes, with the impress of the tomb, and Belvidera is first introduced as the pledge of her husband's fidelity to his treason against the republic. With the ancients this is even more extensively true than with us, and the political revolutions or religious destiny of the drama's persons sternly overrule the conflicts of the social passions. Much of this is to be attributed to their habits of private society, as to the reserve imposed on the female sex, which gives the effect of the irresolution of Hamlet to the timidity of Electra. It seems, however, if the unity and simplicity of the drama, which Lord Byron justly values so highly, are to be restored to the severity of the Grecian model, there cannot be a more obvious step than to bestow on the public and domestic passions their ap-

propriate influence. It is something to provide with scrupulous accuracy that no time be left to be employed by the imagination, that the drama's persons are carefully brought on every different enterprise to the same hall, and that the attention is never distracted by any variety of action ; but it is more necessary to unity that the sentiments and habits of different characters should be observed, and that not be publicly exhibited, which if it escaped from the inmost recesses of solitude in actual life would be phrensy or folly. This is perhaps illustrated in the *Berenice*, in the preface to which Racine declares, that though he can meet all objections to the action, still that on which he most congratulates himself is the reflection, that he has attained that simplicity which was so much to the taste of the ancients.

When united or opposed to the sources of dramatic interest, we all know how powerful is the attraction of love in the drama. Yet this will not explain and cannot justify the theory of its relative importance, as a source of theatrical effect, which in the drama of one people has enshrined it as the sole muse of the stage, and in that of their national rival has demanded its presence, as invariably necessary to poetical effect. It would have seemed as if those who held this theory had never heard of conquests or kingdoms, of the desolation of countries and the revolutions of empires, the waves of the mighty tide, which sweeps on 'kings, consuls, and Cæsars' to their fate. They could not have reflected on the causes and events of such changes, their influence on the character of the agents, the conflicts of public and private duty, the struggles of mental freedom and chivalric submission, which have enslaved or emancipated nations. Those who denied tragedy to be adapted but to one passion must have been reckless spectators indeed of the mighty tragedies on the theatre of empires. It would seem that they could not have witnessed one age building up all the treasures of commerce and the refinements of art, and the next opening the gates of the North to a merciless and resistless invasion. They could not have gazed on the portentous veil which covers the destiny of the world, sometimes lifted for a moment to disclose the agents and engines of approaching convulsion, and then dropped till the moment of desolation arrives. When such a theory is adopted we reject as unpoetical the glorious actions of all who have fought the great contest of improvement, against powerful vice and

enthroned ignorance, against the gigantic resources of whole empires wielded by

‘ the venal band
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honor which they do not understand.’

It is well for us in this country that we have no such fixed associations on this subject to combat, and that with whatever effect the passion of love may be employed by an American poet, he need not fear, from any prejudices of theory to attempt the success of appealing to the sympathy felt by the human breast in the great actions of those, who have improved or defended society.

Before closing this article we would make an extract somewhat amusing from the preface to the tragedy.

‘It is now four years, that I have meditated this work ; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero. But perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was besides well advised by the late Matthew Lewis, on that point, in talking with him of my intention, at Venice in 1817. “If you make him jealous,” said he, “recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakspeare, and an exhausted subject ; stick to the old fiery doge’s natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn ; and make the plot as regular as you can.” Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same council. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage ; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition ; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time. And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience ; the sneering reader and the loud critic, and the tart review are scattered and distant calamities ; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production, which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labor to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man’s doubt of their competency to judge and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made

the attempt, and never will.* But surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and Milman, and John Wilson exist. The "City of the Plague," and the "Fall of Jerusalem," are full of the best *matériel* for tragedy that has been seen since Horace Walpole, except passages of Ethwald and de Montfort. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the Castle of Otranto, he is the "ultimus Romanorum," the author of the "Mysterious Mother," a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance, and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place, than any living writer, be he who he may.'

* 'While I was in the sub-committee of Drury Lane theatre, I can vouch for my colleagues, and I hope for myself, that we did our best to bring back the legitimate drama. I tried what I could to get De Montfort revived, but in vain; and equally in vain in favor of Sotheby's Ivan, which was thought an acting play; and I endeavored also to wake Mr Coleridge to write a tragedy. Those, who are not in the secret, will hardly believe that the School for Scandal is the play, which has brought *least money*, averaging the number of times it has been acted, since its production; so manager Dibdin assured me. Of what has occurred since Maturin's *Bertram*, I am not aware; so that I may be traducing, through ignorance, some excellent new writers; if so, I beg their pardon. I have been absent from England nearly five years, and, till last year, I never read an English newspaper since my departure, and am now only aware of theatrical matters, through the medium of the Parisian Gazette of Galignani [an English newspaper printed in Paris] and only for the last twelve months. Let me then deprecate all offence to tragic and comic writers, to whom I wish well, and of whom I know nothing. The long complaints of the actual state of the drama arise, however, from no fault of the performers. I can conceive nothing better than Kemble, Cook, and Kean, in their very different manners, or than Elliston in *gentleman's* comedy, and some parts of tragedy. Miss O'Neil I never saw, having made and kept a determination to see nothing, which should divide or disturb my recollection of Siddons; Siddons and Kemble were the *ideal* of tragic action; I never saw any thing at all resembling them even in *person*; for this reason, we shall never see again Coriolanus or Macbeth. When Kean is blamed for want of dignity, we should remember that it is a grace and not an art, and not to be attained by study. In all not supernatural parts, he is perfect; even his very defects belong, or seem to belong, to the parts themselves, and appear truer to nature. But of Kemble we may say, with reference to his acting, what the cardinal de Retz said of the Marquis of Montrose, "that he was the only man he ever saw, who reminded him of the heroes of Plutarch."